
THE LICA CONTRACTOR

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Fall 2022

View Point with Dennis Quaid

Solve Workforce Juggling

Registration for CONEXPO 2023



The Official Publication of the Land Improvement Contractors of America



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THE LICA CONTRACTOR

The Land Improvement Contractors of America

The LICA Contractor is the official publication of the Land Improvement Contractors of America, dedicated to the professional conservation of soil and water. LICA was founded in 1951 and is today comprised of twenty-four chapters across the continental United States.

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The LICA Contractor welcomes letters, subject to editing for accuracy and brevity. The LICA Contractor also welcomes articles relevant to the land improvement industry. Include your name and daytime phone number for verification purposes. Deadlines are the twenty-first of the month preceding issue date. All unsolicited material must be accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.

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A Message from the President



I sincerely hope that the extreme heat, lack of rain, then flooding due to rain, and the large forest fires have not affected your work or farming. If ever there was a year that shows the importance of our founding principle, “The Conservation of the Soil and Water,” this is that year. While these natural events and the endless labor and supply shortages may have slowed you down a little, be assured that National LICA never slows down. National is constantly working to bring safety and savings to the members. The introduction of the new World Health Plan brings an incredibly affordable and flexible Health Plan to all members across the country. And they offer what no one else can or does: group rates down to a one person group. Make sure you check it out. Also within these pages, read about our newest benefit. The ConX app is a labor sharing app that will help solve those nagging labor issues.

It has been almost three years since ConExpo 2020 and Vegas shut down. ConExpo is back and bigger than ever, as is the LICA booth and it is coming up fast. Make sure you register for ConExpo through LICA. The savings are fantastic. Also register early for the National Winter Convention taking place during the three days prior to ConExpo. The block of rooms with special pricing fills up fast. Please wear your LICA green while attending the show. In the past Jerry has been told by vendors, “It looks like a wave of green shirts.” Let’s turn that wave into a tsunami.

Intel is building a chip factory outside Columbus, Ohio. Work has already begun. Intel says it will take 7000 contractors to do the work. And they are willing to pay top dollar as they recognize the labor shortage and will be getting government money. This will undoubtedly lead to even more local operator and driver shortages. This makes LICA’s Educational Foundation for Veterans even more important and urgent. The Foundation is up and running with increasing staffing and marketing expenses. Students will start training in Pennsylvania this fall. Your continuing support for the Foundation is extremely appreciated and welcomed.

As always, continue to work safely and I will see you in Vegas.

Chris Wagner, National LICA President



After many months in the making, the LICA Documentary has arrived!

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Coming Soon to a Screen Near You: Viewpoint with Dennis Quaid, Featuring LICA

By CAROLINE KRUG, Assistant to the National LICA CEO

How It Began

In September of 2021, Illinois LICA was approached by Liz Logan, Sr. Producer of “Viewpoint with Dennis Quaid”, with an opportunity to tell our story to the masses. For over 18 years Viewpoint has produced award winning social and educational programming, and their latest concept was a piece on “building trades” and career opportunities in the industry. LICA chapters have been partnering with local schools for years, and with the recent launch of the LICA Educational Foundation for Veterans the timing of this potential collaboration was perfect!

The concept was brought to National LICA CEO, Jerry Biuso, Sr. for review, and ideas were exchanged between LICA and PBS to ensure the project aligned well with LICA’s image and mission. The segment is, above all else, about education-informing viewers about the very latest topics and trends impacting the world. The short-form documentary, hosted by actor, Dennis Quaid, would air in all 50 states for a full year, bridging the gap between shows that air on public television, and be distributed to roughly 60 million homes and businesses. In addition to the documentary, PBS would film a behind-the-scenes profile of LICA, and email it to 1 million viewers. They would narrow the distribution by specific demographics, provided by us, and include a call-to-action in the email directing recipients to LICA’s website. Finally, a one minute “commercial/PSA” spot would air 400 times in the top 100 cities during primetime hours, on networks like Fox Business, CNN, and the History Channel. On top of all the help with distribution, LICA could keep the media for future use in our own campaigns. Jerry determined the project



On-camera talent and supporting staff Charlie, Schafer, Bob Clark, Donna Clark, Caroline Krug, Allison Hack, Shelley Barnhart and Bruce Barnhart, dining the night before an early morning of filming.

would be a great opportunity to build national awareness of our association, so he set out to create an outline for the message and hand-select the on-air talent. Not surprisingly, he assembled a stellar team with varying levels of experience, and diverse perspectives on LICA and the land improvement industry. Featured on camera in the

“After many months in the making, the LICA Documentary has arrived! Here’s a peek behind the scenes...”



Left and above: Caroline Krug and Charlie Schafer under the bright lights during interview filming.

documentary are Bob Clark, National LICA Chairman and past president, Bruce Barnhart, Membership Chairperson and past president, Charlie Schafer, valued associate with extensive knowledge of farm drainage, Allison Hack, who, like many of our members, has quite literally grown up in the association, and me, Caroline Krug, the newest member of the National LICA staff hoping to humbly offer a fresh perspective on the organization.

Building The Story

Once the documentary was cast, the project was handed over to Allison Hack, National LICA Director of Communications. Allison’s background in broadcasting and

communications proved invaluable to the development of the documentary. She happily took the project and ran with it for 8 months, expertly coordinating every aspect from site selection and scheduling to script writing. In an effort to fully develop the story and bring a personal element to the piece, Allison gathered input from the cast to allow them to share their own experiences with LICA. While we didn’t have time to share all of these stories on the air, she was able to pare the script down to a heartfelt, compelling representation of what it means to be part of the LICA family.

Filming started in May at the inaugural fundraiser for the LICA Educational Foundation for Veterans. This event hosted LICA members and supporters from all around the country for a day of golf and fun, with proceeds benefitting



Bruce Barnhart, Allison Hack and Bob Clark on-location during video filming.

the latest passion project of LICA National CEO, Jerry Biuso, Sr. The photographer was able to capture drone footage of beautiful Cantigny golf course, the comradery of our people coming together for a great cause, and participants hitting their best shots, although there may have been some retakes on the course!

Following the development of the script and coordination of schedules the team headed to central Indiana to film the meat and potatoes of the project. Once we all arrived safely from our respective corners of the world, the cast and supporting staff met to go over the plan for the next two days. We had a lot to cover in a limited amount of time, and this was our second and final filming day—we had one shot to get this right. To add to the pressure, we would all be rehearsing our scripts the following day, first casually, then in dress, on a video call with the godfather of LICA, Jerry Biuso, Sr. He's been known to have a critical eye and high expectations, which are perfect for producing great work, not so perfect if you are the subject of his critique. We ended the evening early to rest up for the challenge.

The next morning, each interviewee sat in front of the computer monitor to run through their lines, while the rest of us looked on, anxiously awaiting our turn in “the chair”. As expected, Jerry did not hold back — tweaking the script, commenting on tone of voice, posture, and calling out



Filming the job site for the video.

any other involuntary quirks that might come up when a non-actor is put on the spot. Moving on to the dress rehearsal there was a whole new set of concerns with wardrobe that Jerry needed to address. Insisting on shirt changes, pointing out wrinkles and hairs out of place, everything had to be just right. Some might call this constructive criticism, while Bruce affectionately referred to it as “Abiuso”. However you label it, it was effective, because by the end of a long day of practice we had something resembling a professional set of interviews. Not perfect, but a vast improvement from where we started.

We ended the day at a nearby Italian steakhouse for a pre-filming LICA Family dinner. We shared a nice meal and exchanged the usual stories and comical moments from past LICA events, but there was a different buzz in the air..a nervous excitement about what was to come. Before my career in sales, the extent of my experience in the public eye was a two-word solo in my high school musical. I had never been on TV and had historically dreaded the spotlight. If I'm honest, the impending interviews were bringing back some

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Bob Clark on local radio promoting the foundation during the golf outing.

of those anxious feelings. None of us, with the exception of Allison, had much experience in front of a camera. And although we've had our fair share of public speaking, this felt very different. This was going to be viewed by millions of people. This would become a permanent part of LICA history.

And...Action!

On filming day, it was all hands on deck. Everyone chipped in to press shirts and powder noses to help LICA put its collective best foot forward. Bob Clark volunteered the jobsite of a new residential subdivision his company was preparing for some on-location footage of real land improvement in progress. As always, safety was top priority so everyone, including the camera crew, donned hard hats and safety vests before stepping onto the jobsite. The plan was to film interviews indoors then take the production team outdoors to capture some b-roll of the crew at work, however the forecast was threatening rain in the afternoon. We made the last-minute decision to film the jobsite first thing in the morning and the unexpected change in schedule turned out for the best. The light from the rising sun provided a fantastic backdrop for the scene, and the footage turned out beautifully! The crew working on-site was eager to be part of the filming and excited to share the news of their impending "fame" with friends and family. Bruce and Bob were naturals on the "set", casually walking and discussing the work being performed by the crew. They were clearly in their element and could have probably spent the entire day in the field.

And the footage would not be complete without showcasing the massive excavators and dozers in action, hopefully enticing our audience to hop in the cab of a piece of equipment and try it out for themselves! Once filming on-location wrapped, the team headed indoors for the interview portion of the piece.

On arrival, the camera crew was already hard at work, setting up lighting and sound equipment while the cast scrambled to get ourselves "camera-ready" with last-minute hair and makeup touchups and wardrobe adjustments. One by one we sat down for our interviews, with the film producer asking questions and allowing us to respond. Fortunately, he had a softer approach than Jerry and did his best to put us at ease. He offered gentle feedback and multiple "takes" to help us find our best delivery. As an added fail-safe, he reassured us that the footage would pass through editing, and it was their job to make us look good on television. The opportunity to stop and start over certainly came in handy, because acting is not as easy as it looks! As confident as I was in my part of the interview, once I sat down in front of the camera it was almost as if pieces of my memory had been erased. I think this "phenomenon" affected all of us a little bit, so special thanks to the editors for their work on this project! Despite our lack of professional television experience, we were all excited to be a part of the documentary and determined to do our best. Once the last interview wrapped you could feel the tension break. There was a collective sigh of relief, but with a hint of sadness. It's amazing how something that can take months to plan and prepare for can be over in a flash (pun intended). We all parted ways and crossed our fingers that we had represented LICA well, and our contributions would create a documentary that would also create change.

Our Hope for the Future

This project captures the experiences of some of LICA's members and shares a powerful message about the importance of the land improvement industry. Guiding America's youth toward careers in land improvement is absolutely critical to the growth and development of our country's infrastructure and sustainable farms to ensure crops that feed America for generations to come. As we all know, skilled operators and employees around the country are in short supply, and young adults often aren't aware of the many rewarding career opportunities in our industry. LICA aims to change this unfortunate truth by projecting our story to an audience of over 60 million viewers. Watch for the LICA commercial on Fox Business Network, and the LICA Documentary on PBS in October. To see a preview of the production, visit licanational.org, and stay tuned for the future of LICA! ■



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Risk Management Is Everyone's Job. From Jobsite Safety to Equipment Warranty

By JIMMY BYNUM, President of Garde Solutions

Risk management is a team sport, and it should not be left to the CFO or Controller to handle once a year when it is time to renew the insurance policies. Risk Management, particularly the knowledge and application of a structured approach to managing risk or uncertainty, is essential for all businesses, especially contractors. Understanding the risks facing each aspect of your business is the first step. Elevating risk management as part of the daily conversation and setting strategic goals along with milestones and metrics visible to the whole company will deliver significant results for your organization.

We have found that insurance and risk management are typically mystifying and confusing to most folks. To help simplify it, we suggest starting with some basics:

- Understand the critical elements of risk management, including avoidance, retention, sharing, transferring, and loss prevention
- Establish a structured plan to demystify “insurance” and increase awareness of where to go for knowledge to raise engagement around risk management
- Explore the three different means of financing risks to decide what is best for you
 - Leave the risk on your balance sheet
 - Purchase insurance from a third-party insurance company
 - Setting up your own captive insurance company to manage your risks
- Review examples of how to effectively reduce fleet ownership costs and risks with a focus on warranty and extended service contracts

Whether it is property insurance, workers’ compensation, automobile damage, or a warranty risk, you have choices to manage the risk. Retaining risk is how much “deductible” or “retention” you are willing to take on yourself. Retention at the first layer of risk from \$0 - \$50,000 of each claim is not the only option. Retention in the higher levels or excess, where the insured would take all claims between \$250,000 - \$400,000.

Avoiding risk is another means of risk management. Deciding not to work in high-risk areas is an example of risk avoidance. Avoidance is simply not taking on certain risks rather than managing a specific risk through retention or transfer.

Transferring risk is what we typically think of when buying insurance. Moving the risk to another entity in exchange for money, or “insurance premiums,” is most common. The example above with Johnny Backhoe Services shows his buildings, equipment, trucks, and bonds transferred to an insurance company. Because JBS is a smaller company, that does not have the balance sheet to retain much risk.

| | Balance Sheet | OEM/3 rd Party | Self-Insure/Captive |
|----------------------|--|---|---|
| Advantages | Control cash Pricing flexibility Simple structure Revenue deferred | Transfer risk Regulatory compliance Revenue recognition Program management | Control cash Simple structure Investment income Profitable Pricing flexibility Claim decisions 3 rd party risk |
| Disadvantages | Lack of core competencies Retain risk Revenue recognition Compliance risk Insurance accounting issues in manufacturing environment | Surrender cash No investment income Limited price flexibility Claim decisions Data/IP sharing Limits underwriting profit | Retain risk Regulatory filings Revenue recognition Compliance risk |



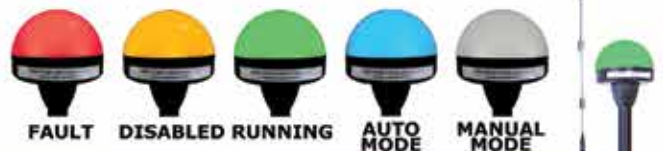
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Hopefully, as Johnny Backhoe Services grows, they will keep more risk and eventually have their own captive insurance company. With a captive, you are transferring risk to your own insurance company.

Taking a good long look at your risk appetite, balance sheet strength, and the depth and breadth of your historical risk experience is the first step. Make a data-driven informed decision on how you plan to manage risks. Raising the importance and strategic planning around risk management is often overlooked and not a priority at many companies. Taking a few basic steps and finding a reliable partner to help you navigate the process is essential in setting a proper risk management strategy. This chart provides a high-level view of the different means of managing risk.

Captive insurance companies are often misunderstood and not typically introduced by the most insurance brokers. A captive is a closely held, licensed insurance company owned and controlled by the insured parties. Establishing a captive insurance company requires a strategic review of the company and programs being considered, including a feasibility study, to confirm the need and location for a captive.

Setting up a captive is a long-term strategic decision, not one taken lightly or to meet short-term goals. A company should use a captive to increase leadership's engagement and focus on the value of active risk management. The owners must want to be in the insurance business and be willing to assume and share insurance risks. A captive will allow a company to increase control over:

- Ultimate cost-reducing the cost of insurance and increasing control over risk
- Coverage offerings, including by setting specific terms and conditions depending on the business
- Direct access to the reinsurance markets
- Claims and loss control

Do you think extended warranties or protection plans are a waste of time and money? For many consumer goods, the answer to that is often an absolute yes. Frequently, extended service contracts or "extended warranties" are too focused as profit centers for the sellers rather than optimized for the equipment owner. But with the correct data and risk management structure, extended warranties can be an indispensable tool when purchasing, owning and operating heavy equipment.

An extended protection plan is a way to manage costs for your equipment, but it should also fit as part of the product life cycle strategy you have established. After all, your equipment is an asset. Some key questions to ask yourself when considering your extended protection options are:

- What is my current process for maintenance and repairs?
- Is warranty and risk management on the radar of my senior leadership?
- What is my company's appetite for financial risk?
- Who is backing the extended service contract program?

The primary question is who is backing the program, as this will dictate the overall value you as the equipment owner receives.

OEM Backed — Original Equipment Manufacturers are typically best positioned to manage the risks associated with their products. All manufacturers have a standard warranty and the teams to support the claims and administration. Adding an extended warranty or service contract is not a significant challenge. Picking a solution backed and underwritten by the manufacturer is typically the best option for




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equipment owners. The OEM wants to build loyalty with their customers, both through their dealers and through providing parts and service. This OEM-backed solution cost structure is highly efficient. Keeping the failure data within the organization and providing valuable insights that drive quality improvements back to the manufacturer is also best for the OEM. Dealers are already using the warranty platform, so administration at the dealership is seamless. Frequently, OEMs will offer marketing programs that support extended warranty, which is also a significant advantage for the contractor.

Third-Party Extended Protection Plans — Compared to the OEM offerings, the high frictional costs for claims administrators, underwriters, brokers, and commissions paid to dealers reduce the funds available to pay the actual claims. Third-party extended service contracts are not likely to provide the best value for equipment owners.



Regardless of the method, an extended service contract protects any machine in the product life cycle. Whether construction, agriculture, or forestry equipment, each product family has an industry-standard extended warranty that addresses specific customer needs, such as time, deductibles, and portability.

A vital benefit of a long-extended protection program is shifting an equipment manager's variable costs to fixed costs. But long-term warranties can provide a return on investment for all users. OEMs like longer-term warranty because it gives them more data on the quality and reliability of machines that they can relay to dealers. Knowing that trained mechanics will handle repairs quickly and efficiently lowers overall owning and operating costs and builds loyalty. And dealers benefit from increased revenue from parts and services, confidence in their equipment, and higher resale values because of the rich data set generated.

Your business, people, and equipment fleet are all assets. You should invest in taking care of these critical assets with the proper risk management strategies, not simply for the financial gains but also the safety gains. The cost of insurance is not likely to go down, so be proactive and get focus on this critical aspect of your business.

Jimmy Bynum is President of Garde Solutions. Garde Solutions partners with manufacturers, dealers, and fleet owners to evaluate, restructure, and optimize their risk management strategies with a focus on enterprise risks warranty programs, resulting in millions of dollars of additional earnings. Prior to Garde Solutions, Jimmy spent 12 years in global leadership roles with Cat Insurance, the captive insurance and extended protection division of Caterpillar. As Managing Director of Asia Pacific based in Singapore, he led the efforts to establish extended protection plans and physical damage insurance programs for Caterpillar in Australia, China, Southeast Asia, and India. He has been active in the industry serving on the boards of Global Warranty and Service Contract Association and the Texas Captive Insurance Association. Garde Solutions is not acting as an insurance broker or soliciting insurance business. Garde is a trusted advisors and program manager helping their partner companies over the long-term.



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New Associate Seeks to Solve Workforce Juggling for the Land Improvement Industry

How Labor Sharing Can Help You Manage Your Workload

By BRAD LANGERAK, Founder of ConX

In the trades, it can be difficult to manage workloads. Demand fluctuates from one season to the next. Sometimes, you have way more jobs than you can take on, and other times there isn't enough work to go around. When business gets slow and you're overstaffed, it can be difficult to keep your best employees happy. And employment costs are a constant, even if your employees aren't busy working for you. At other times, you may have more work than you're able to complete at once, and you may be struggling with the decision to either hire more employees, or pay expensive overtime rates to your current team. Not to mention, overworking your existing employees comes with its own set of problems. You may even be forced to extend your customers' wait times or turn down new job opportunities entirely. In the past, you may have been able to call a friend and borrow some labor on a handshake, but these arrangements come with questions about how the employee gets paid, how they are insured and who is ultimately responsible for taking care of them. Things have the potential to get complicated very quickly.

Being a former electrical contractor, I understand the struggles contractors face when it comes to managing their labor. I got my license in Michigan in the mid-90s after completing my apprenticeship. In the years to follow, I was an owner and operations manager for a union contractor. I quickly learned of the benefits to having a labor pool to expand and contract my labor force. In 2004, I moved to Denver, getting into sales in the construction industry. Always with an entrepreneurial spirit, I constantly had a side hustle which included solar and fencing. Even with these companies, the stress of labor management and control was still very prevalent. It was at this time that the concept of ConX came about.

No matter which end of the equation you're on, this labor sharing app can help. If you're unable to offer your employees

full-time hours during the slow season, you can use ConX to offer them to other contractors for a small profit. This allows you to retain your best workers as employees while also giving them the opportunity to work as much as they would like to. If you have more work than you're able to complete at once, labor sharing makes it easy to expand beyond your existing full-time employees. Using ConX, you can let others in



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work being done. ConX provides a whiteboard function that allows owners, project managers, and supervisors to assign jobs, plan them out, and monitor costs. Integrated into the app, we have tools for time reporting, time approvals, and invoicing. This helps you to manage employees and borrowed workers quickly and easily. And if you're ready to expand your business, you can also find potential new hires. We're implementing a jobs section that will allow you to search and browse resumes. This will help you find the right fit more quickly and easily, while reducing hiring costs for you.

With a goal of helping as many contractors as possible grow their companies and increase profitability, ConX is expanding throughout the construction industry and we're happy to offer a customized solution for LICA. ■

For more information, contact ConX:
 Brad Langerak at (720) 314-8831
 or BRADL@CONX-USA.com
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the labor pool know about the work opportunity. Additional skilled workers can join you for a set amount of time to help you meet the extra demand. When you can get the labor you need, when you need it, you won't have to turn down a good opportunity. Besides allowing you to take advantage of more job opportunities, this can reduce the need to pay overtime hours or extend your customers' wait times.

We designed our app with the tools and capabilities contractors need to manage their workloads with ease. We understand that you don't have a lot of time to learn how to use complex programs. So, we made our app easy to use so that you can focus on running your business. In addition to borrowing and loaning employees with ease, ConX can help with job planning and monitoring as well. To determine job costs and keep your business running smoothly, you need to be able to plan and monitor the

About the Author: Brad Langerak, Founder of ConX, is a labor management entrepreneur and former electrical contractor with extensive experience in the construction, solar, and fencing industries. He currently resides in Castle Rock, CO with his wife and two teenage daughters. Brad also has one older son who is married and lives in Michigan. Brad currently owns Hamata Systems, Inc., a holding company and incubator to help other start-ups and ConX-USA, Inc., a labor share, labor management software company. Brad lives a philanthropic life, sits on the board for two charities, and is heavily involved in his church.



Market Watch

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Sharing the Risks and Rewards Controlling Construction Costs and Incentivizing Savings

By CRAIG MARTIN, Construction Attorney with Lamson Dugan and Murray

Here we are, two years from COVID-19 and we are still dealing with the impact. Soaring material costs, labor shortages, supply chain problems are wreaking havoc on construction projects. While we would all like to see escalation clauses in our contracts to allow for the recovery of increased costs, that is not always possible. But what if you tied an escalation clause to a savings clause that would allow you to increase your contract sum due to cost increases and allow the owner to share in the costs savings? Using a shared savings clause in addition to

an escalation clause may help you negotiate better contract language for your projects.

What is a shared savings clause?

A shared savings clause allows an owner and contractor to share in the savings the contractor achieves on a project. During contract negotiations, the parties can agree on a percentage of savings each will receive for any cost savings in the project. A typical clause would include:

upon completion of the project, if the contractor's total costs are less than the contract sum, then the difference between the contract sum and the total cost (the Savings) will be divided between the owner and contractor as follows: (a) 35% of the savings will be retained by the owner and (b) 65% of the savings will go to the contractor.

Why consider a savings clause?

There are several benefits for using a savings clause. From the owner's perspective, it can incentivize the contractor to monitor and control construction costs. A contractor can use a savings clause as a tool to negotiate other terms, such as an escalation clause. Specifically, a contractor may be able to negotiate the addition of an escalation clause by increasing the percentage an owner may recover under the savings clause. In essence, the owner may see the opportunity to recover savings as a tradeoff to allowing an escalation clause.

The impact of COVID continues to haunt contractors as they deal with volatile material costs. While it may be difficult to negotiate the stand-alone escalation clause in your contract, you may have better luck tying an escalation clause to a shared cost savings clause. By presenting this option, owners may recognize the opportunity to participate in the potential for cost savings as a satisfactory offset to taking on the risk of material cost increases. ■

Craig Martin is a construction attorney with Lamson Dugan & Murray, LLP law firm in Omaha, Nebraska, and a member of the collaborative Johnson Team. The Johnson Team consists of a group of specialists serving LICA members on matters of significance – planning, protection, and preservation of their businesses and families. If you have any questions, Craig's e-mail is cmartin@ldmlaw.com.



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Is Inflation Impacting Your Bottom Line?

How Lowering Your Healthcare Coverage Costs Can Help



By WAYNE OLIVER, Senior Vice President of Operations for Health Cooperative Strategies

According to the federal government, the current rate of inflation in the United States is 9.1% as of July 2022. Inflation has an impact on small businesses, families and the US economy. Inflation occurs when the purchasing power of a currency decreases over time. That declining purchasing power can be reflected in the increase in an average price of certain goods and services in the economy during the same period. Inflation usually affects commodities such as fuel, metal, food, grains, as well as utilities such as transportation and electricity, and services including labor, healthcare, and entertainment. And it hits everybody's pocketbook.

The Cost of Your Healthcare Coverage

According to Medscape, rampant inflation doesn't just mean a spike in everyday expenses like gas and groceries. It's also bound to have a significant impact on the cost of

healthcare — and on your business. A report from McKinsey & Company predicts that the current inflationary spiral will force healthcare providers to charge higher reimbursement rates, and those costs inevitably will be passed along to both employers and consumers.

Bottom line: You and your employees will likely have to pay more out of pocket.

So, lowering the cost of health coverage for you, your employees and their dependents is important. Forbes indicates that even though the medical premium year-over-year increase was less than that of inflation, employers and employees should still prepare for a benefits price hike. The average company saw an increase in individual medical premiums of nearly 6.3%, pacing just below the rate of inflation. On the family side, medical premiums rose at just over half that rate— 3.35% on average.

A Possible Solution: The LICA Health Plan

The Land Improvement Contractors of America (LICA) recently launched the LICA Health Plan specifically designed to help LICA members keep their healthcare coverage costs down. The current landscape has led many associations to launch their own member benefit targeting better healthcare coverage options. Inflation will inevitably cause an increase in benefits prices; however, employers can begin to prepare now by examining their current offerings and looking into options that will help lower costs while still providing employees with ample choice in an evolving market. With that in mind, LICA members would be well served to look at the LICA Health Plan which has been designed specifically to meet the needs of LICA members. ■

For more information contact the World Insurance Associates Vincent Basciano at (973) 871-1512 or vincentbasciano@worldinsurance.com Terence Gorman (848) 456-8600 or terencegorman@worldinsurance.com

About the author: Mr. Oliver is the Senior Vice President of Operations for Health Cooperative Strategies (HCS). LICA partnered with World and HCS to launch and administer the LICA Health Plan.




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Save Water and Increase Crop Yield with SWRT Solutions' Proven Conservation Technology Innovation

By THOMAS CHRISTENSEN, C.E.O. SWRT Solutions, Inc.

Droughts impacting agriculture in the U.S. are occurring more frequently, for longer durations, and on a more widespread basis. Water supply, whether groundwater or surface water storage, is less plentiful and competition for this supply is greater than ever from expanding urban and suburban communities, reducing its availability for agricultural uses. Agriculture is increasingly left with less water, limiting its availability for crop use at the right time and in the right amount. Optimization of limited available water is more critical than ever if agriculture is to remain viable and productive, especially in dry irrigated areas.

Over four decades of scientific research carried out by Dr. Alvin J.M. Smucker, President of SWRT Solutions and world recognized Professor Emeritus of Soil Biophysics and Plant Physiology at Michigan State University, have led SWRT Solutions, Inc. into developing new technology to optimize

crop root-zone water and soil nutrients for dramatically increased crop yields on sandy soils. SWRT's uniquely designed and engineered use of thin but durable polymer membranes for water retention have been proven effective in field use across eight countries, including the U.S.

SWRT Solutions' innovative membranes and their mechanical installation with advanced technology offer a significant solution for sandy soils challenged by water availability for crop growth. These membranes have proven to produce increased crop yields of between 1.4- and 3.4-times comparable fields without membranes, while reducing water use by 50 percent on sandy soils. Less water use, less energy consumption in accessing and distributing water, more efficient crop nutrient use, and increased crop yields are all well established results from the installation of SWRT's scientifically designed and engineered membranes.

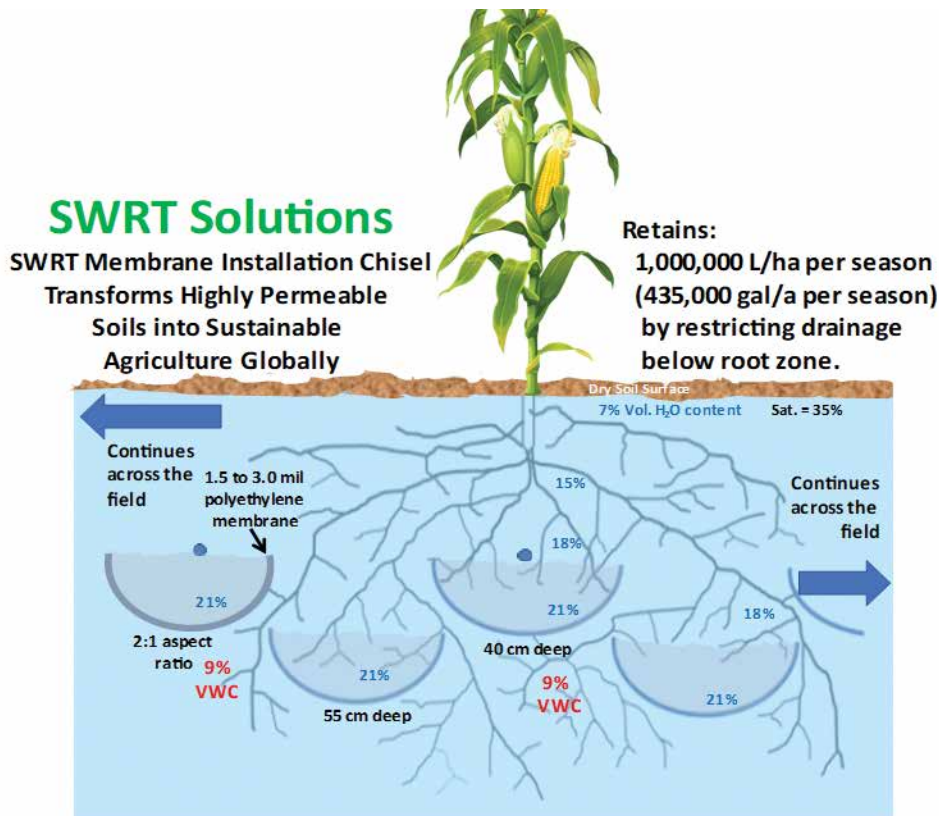


Figure 1: Schematic of polymer membranes installed at 18- and 24-inch depths.

SWRT uses proprietary MIMs to insert contoured engineered polymer membranes at multiple depths (typically 18 and 24 inches) and with 12-inch horizontal spacing within highly permeable sandy soils. Soil water above and within these membranes is retained two times longer following rainfall or irrigation, compared to the same soil conditions without SWRT membranes. Figure 1 shows the cascading arrangement of installed polymer membranes in sandy soils.

Since 2015, SWRT has continued to improve its patented MIM for installation, moving from two rows to four at one pass, enhancing its soil membrane placement and handling/cutting technology components, and installing robotics to reduce labor requirements. Its newest MIM now can install polymer membranes at the rate of 4 acres per eight-hour day in dry sandy soils. Once membranes are installed, and with a crop planted, the returns for a producer begin to occur immediately and there are no maintenance costs incurred. SWRT membranes are an environmentally-friendly solution that will last at least 50 years based on research about the longevity of these inert polymers.

Research and field trials in the U.S. with SWRT membranes have taken place in Arizona, California, Michigan, and Texas. More widespread use with multiple farmers also has taken place in Michigan, the home base of SWRT Solutions. Efforts to date in the U.S. for at least 10 crops have shown the Return on Investment (ROI) ranging from less than two years

to about nine years depending on the crop. The average ROI for these 10 crops and accounting for the one-time installation cost has been less than four years. Membranes installed using SWRT Solutions' scientific approach generally double the soil water in the crop root zone, improving root water uptake efficiency and maintaining healthy plants root for longer in the growing season. These membranes also are a "climate-smart" conservation practice as they reduce greenhouse gas emissions and crop resiliency. The membranes can be used in both irrigated and non-irrigated cropland settings.

SWRT Solutions is now ready to expand the use of its new mechanical installation machine (MIM) to cropland areas in the U.S. with significant acres of sandy soil in crop production - - an estimated 137 million acres of opportunity. Land improvement contractors are ideally suited to implement this new technology because of their experience with specialized equipment, their proven success on-the-ground in farm settings, and their relationship of trust with America's agricultural producers. If you are interested in learning more about this innovative water saving technology and your potential role as a land improvement contractor, please contact SWRT Solutions Vice President for Customer Relations, Steve Law, at law@SWRTsolutions.com or SWRT Solutions Chief Executive Officer, Tom Christensen, at twchristensen23@gmail.com. ■

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Register today for CONEXPO 2023 Through LICA and Qualify for a Significant Discount!

By ALLISON HACK, LICA Director of Communications

CONEXPO-CON/AGG is the largest construction trade show in North America and held in Las Vegas every three years. LICA has been exhibiting at this massive event for 6 consecutive shows. The LICA Booth we will be centrally located in the newly constructed West Hall of the Las Vegas Convention Center, booth WL2000.

Through our partnership with AEM, LICA Members (and friends) get a significant discount on entry to CONEXPO. To receive the discount members must use the link on

LICANational.org under the “Events” tab. From there attendees create an account with CONEXPO and can register for the show, select your education sessions, and choose a hotel.

Whatever education sessions you choose to attend? Not a problem, you can skip that portion and login later to purchase your education passes.

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Register by: 3/13/2023 - Badge Fee: \$149

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National LICA President Chris Wagner and New York LICA Executive Director Maura Dibble work in the LICA Booth during CONEXPO 2020.



National LICA CEO Jerry Biuso recruiting a new member with New York LICA President looking on while working the LICA 2020 booth.



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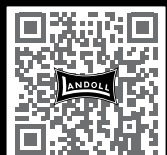
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CASE Introduces New Industry-First Equipment Category with Launch of the CASE Minotaur™ DL550 Compact Dozer Loader

CASE Construction Equipment is launching an all-new, industry-first equipment category with the introduction of the CASE Minotaur™ DL550 compact dozer loader. Weighing in at more than 18,000 pounds and working with 114 horsepower, the new first-of-its-kind machine delivers true dozing and grading performance, as well as powerful site loading capabilities and compatibility with hundreds of attachments. A single platform has never delivered this level of versatility, power and precision — all culminating in an entirely new product category created by CASE: the compact dozer loader.

“The Minotaur is truly a fleet of one, that is second to none,” says Jeff Jacobsmeyer, product manager, CASE. “Business owners and fleet managers looking for a compact solution that delivers countless benefits in a single footprint will immediately see the versatility this exciting new machine brings to their fleets and will quickly understand what a ‘compact dozer loader’ is capable of accomplishing.”

“It’s what the industry has asked for,” he adds. “Customer input has been a major part of the design and engineering process since the first concepts were discussed, and the result is an entirely purpose-built, intentionally designed machine proudly built here in the United States.”

The hallmark advancement of the CASE Minotaur DL550 is the chassis-integrated C-frame with six-way dozer blade. The C-frame hydraulically couples into both the chassis of the machine, as well as the attachment coupler. This design provides the stability and smooth operating plane of a small dozer while ensuring that all operating power is channeled through the whole body of the machine. This establishes greater performance and long-term reliability than the simple combination of a dozer blade attachment to a traditional compact track loader.

It also comes standard with CASE Universal Machine Control, which makes the machine ready for any of the major three providers of machine control technology, which are sold separately. It’s also available with an optional, industry-exclusive fully integrated ripper for tearing up tough terrain to simplify dozing and earthmoving operations.

The C-frame is then detached to allow the operator to use it as a loader with a heavy-duty 1.25-cubic-yard bucket, or with hundreds of common loader attachments many equipment owners already have in their fleet.

The CASE Minotaur DL550 compact dozer loader holds 29 patents and has pushed through more than 10,000 hours of field tests, in addition to countless customer clinics and typical lab and engineering testing.

“We’ve put this machine through hell and back — pound for pound, there’s no machine like it that delivers the dozing power and precision, as well as the dynamic loading performance,” says Jacobsmeyer. “This groundbreaking, all-new machine demonstrates CASE’s commitment to delivering real-world innovation rooted in customer need.”

True Dozer Performance in a Compact Footprint

Built on a dozer-style undercarriage and pushing with more than 25,000 pounds of drawbar pull, the CASE Minotaur DL550 delivers true dozing power and performance. The machine is available with three different track options to meet operator preference and jobsite profiles:

- 14-inch single-grouser steel tracks
- 18-inch triple-grouser steel tracks
- 17.7-inch rubber tracks

The 90- or 96-inch six-way blade connected to the integrated C-frame is the same blade featured on the CASE 650M dozer and gives the operator a full range of dozer controls and move-

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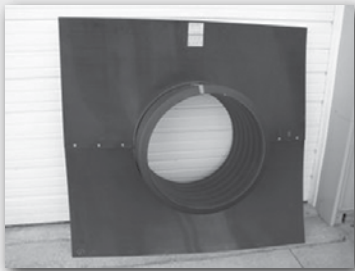


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ments. The machine's electro-hydraulic controls also deliver responsiveness like full-sized CASE dozers, with the ability to adjust blade, steering and shuttle sensitivity to smooth, moderate or aggressive to meet the operator's preference. Blade responsiveness can be further dialed in to operator preference by independently setting the speed of the blade tilt, lift and angle.

The industry-exclusive, fully integrated rear ripper is easily controlled from within the cab — it comes standard with three shanks and can be expanded to five shanks for more aggressive ripping. The rear ripper feature must be selected when ordering as it cannot be added after the time of purchase.

"The CASE Minotaur DL550 is built like a dozer with the full control and operator experience of a larger machine," says Jacobsmeyer. "That includes the ability to deploy a full range of 2D and 3D machine control solutions that turn this machine into a compact fine grading solution that can get into areas and jobsites where it's not practical to bring in a full-sized dozer."

CASE Universal Machine Control provides universal harnesses and brackets to integrate machine control

solutions from any of the big three providers of precision construction solutions — Leica Geosystems, Topcon and Trimble. This allows equipment owners to add the machine to their fleet with the confidence it can be integrated directly into preferred/existing machine control ecosystems. It also provides rental fleets the ability to easily switch between machine control brands, which allows for excellent rental flexibility based on customer preference.

A Powerful Site Loader and Attachment Beast

In its loader configuration, the CASE Minotaur DL550 features a 5,500-pound rated operating capacity (50 percent of tipping load) with 12,907 pounds of breakout force. It features a vertical lift pattern and operates in the ISO control pattern. It also features advanced electro-hydraulic control capabilities where operators can easily dial in total machine responsiveness to low, moderate or aggressive; or independently set tilt, lift and drive speed, as well as loader arm and drive control to best meet the demands of the work.

CASE builds the machine standard from the factory with enhanced high-flow auxiliary hydraulics for running the most demanding and high-powered attachments — such as mulching heads and cold planers. Minotaur's enhanced high-flow hydraulics can deliver up to 41.6 GPM at 4,100 psi via the 2-inch hydraulic quick couplers.

The machine also allows operators to harness all that power with "Hydraulics on Demand", where the operator can easily select the percentage of auxiliary hydraulic flow to the attachment via the machine's multi-function display. This allows the operator to dial in attachment performance to their preference or the recommendation of the attachment manufacturer — ensuring both effective and proper operation of the attachment.

"The front coupler featured on this machine is the same as you will find on most compact loaders — this opens the machine up to be used with hundreds of attachments," says Jacobsmeyer. "We've given operators the ability to turn this compact dozer loader into one of the industry's most versatile and powerful compact machines, and deliver on the awesome capabilities that other manufacturers tried to emulate after the original concepts were announced."

Fully Connected and Collaborative Fleet Management

CASE has taken fleet management of compact equipment to an entirely new level with the inclusion of the CASE SiteConnect Module — a powerful device that improves the volume, flow and integration of data to the CASE SiteWatch telematics platform for real-time monitoring and management of maintenance and service intervals, as well as the analysis of equipment utilization and performance.

It's also the foundation from which CASE has made the collaborative fleet management and remote diagnostics of compact equipment a reality. This enhanced connectivity allows the machine owner to share — with permis-



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sion — real-time machine information with their CASE dealer and the CASE Uptime Center in Racine, Wis.

“With both CASE and the local CASE dealer monitoring machine performance, we’re able to be proactive and anticipate potential equipment needs to maximize uptime,” says Jacobsmeyer. “The goal of these advances is rooted in customer need for maximum uptime, and the CASE Minotaur DL550 compact dozer loader delivers that — including the ability to remotely diagnose machine events and drastically shorten response times when service is needed.”

CASE achieves these remote service capabilities through the CASE SiteManager App (iOS and An-

droid). This app pairs the operator’s phone or device to the machine to enable remote analysis by a certified CASE technician, which allows them to diagnose the health of each connected machine through various parameter readings and fault codes. The technician decides as to whether the issue can be addressed remotely — such as clearing codes or updating software — or if it requires a trip to the machine.

“Reducing trips to the field, showing up with the needed parts on the first visit, and the ability to avoid field visits all together by remotely clearing basic codes all drive major savings in time and resources, both for the equipment owner and the dealer ser-

vice department,” says Jacobsmeyer. “This type of collaborative fleet management has the ability to drive major gains for fleets of all sizes and ensure optimal uptime.”

And in the case of a service need, the CASE Minotaur DL550 is built for ease of service with groundline access to grouped service points and checks like every machine in the CASE lineup. Service intervals and machine operating information are easily accessed in the machine’s eight-inch LCD display in the cab.

For more information on the all-new, groundbreaking CASE Minotaur DL550 compact dozer loader, contact your local CASE dealer, and learn more at Case-CE.com/Minotaur. ■

National LICA Membership Drive



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National LICA is running a promotion that awards \$100 to any existing Contractor Member who recruits a new Contractor Member during the month of September. Executive Directors can participate too!

A couple things to note:

- This promotion starts September 1st and ends September 30th, 2022.
- The award money comes from National after the promotion ends.
- New member must be a Contractor Member.
- New member application and payment must be received online or postmarked by midnight on September 30th, 2022.

**For additional information
please contact Caroline Krug
cnational.lica@gmail.com**



Congress Gathering Input for 2023 Farm Bill Development

By NICK YAKSICH, LICA Director of Government Relations

America's farmers -- as well as LICA members and those who depend on a healthy farm economy -- are beginning to provide Congress with input on the 2023 farm bill policies. The farm bill is a critical tool for ensuring our nation's food supply remains secure. Funding for this comprehensive bill, which many call a food and farm bill, includes risk management tools for farmers, access to nutrition for low-income families, conservation programs and investments in agricultural research. Issues such as climate change and diversity programs are seeing an increasingly greater role in farm bill policy development.

The 2018 farm bill brought certainty to farm and ranch families through crop insurance, improved risk management programs and support for beginning farmers and ranchers, while also providing much-needed funding for trade development and agriculture research. The enacted 2018 farm bill was budget neutral and received strong bipartisan support.

2022 Midterm Election Impacts

Importantly, it's not just the policies that farmers will have an eye on, but the politics as well. Most experts believe the House will flip to Republican control with the new Speaker, Rep Kevin McCarthy, appointing committee chairs who will set the agenda for the next congressional session, during which the farm bill will be drafted and considered. The current House chair is from Georgia with agriculture priorities quite different from the new potential chair from Pennsylvania.

The House and Senate Agriculture Committees, however, have traditionally been a haven for bipartisan cooperation, despite the tensions of the current political environment. Every stakeholder group calls for continued bipartisan support, as the farm bill is one bill that impacts every American.

Commodity Groups Weighing in on Priorities

While Congress remains polarized, there is a glimmer of hope for bipartisan collaboration in the upcoming reauthorization. There is a broad range of stakeholders including farmers, food companies, conservationists and nutrition advocates, coming together to support the bill. Policymakers will have to sell the final package not only to their constituents, but to a majority of Americans to build support for the additional revenue that will be needed.

The American Farm Bureau (AFB) reauthorization priorities are focused on maintaining and strengthening the important risk management tools. In addition, AFB is emphasizing working land conservation and other mechanisms that provide both environmental benefits and the ability for greater food production. AFB is committed to making sure that rural America has the connectivity and the tools it needs to compete in a digital era. And most certainly, the AFB will work within Congress to build strong bipartisan support for the policies.

Michael Crowder, President of the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD), recently told Agripulse about NACD's regional task forces which are meeting to develop farm bill policy recommendations. Crowder emphasized the funding shortfall in technical assistance to conservation program administration, but is pleased with recent historic funding that Congress and the Administration appropriated for these programs. At the core of NACD's principles is that conservation be a locally led, voluntary-based solution to maintain soil health. Crowder also discussed the increased role that conservation can play in contributing to climate change solutions, stating conservation is climate smart agriculture.

Other stakeholders will seek to address their most pressing and evolving needs in the context of higher input costs, unpredictability around climate change provisions and general support for conservation and sustainability. Nutrition, smart-climate agriculture, broadband and consistent training and education across the workforce continue to demand support.

Nutrition and Food Security

The nutrition portion will likely be the most contentious – but vital – element of the 2023 Farm Bill. Detailing topics such as nutrition assistance, management and commodity support, and conservation, it will touch every part of the food and beverage ecosystem. Given its impact on program recipients throughout the nation, these elements are increasingly important to reflect the agility and flexibility demonstrated throughout the pandemic. From nutrition and emergency assistance to supplemental food programs for seniors, citizens across the country rely on the outcome of this bill to meet the ever-evolving demands of the people.

Smart-Climate Agriculture

Mirroring the Biden administration's approach, climate related facets of the package will include voluntary, pro-production incentives that have the potential to result in a complimentary income stream for farmers. The climate-smart approach is being articulated as a process-based comprehensive strategy that keeps the farmers' best interests in mind. A climate solution contribution is imperative to the agricultural industry's future and supports the collaboration and integration of both stakeholders and producers.

Workforce Training and Education

Agriculture and food industries both seem to see consistent, measurable, research-based information which can be used to develop the workforce training and education programs. Polling shows that consumers say brands should focus on developing working practices that protect the environment as they prepare for the future. From best practices on-the-ground to food storage in the supermarket, all individuals involved in the various steps of the supply chain will benefit from continued training and education.

Policies and Elections Matter

With the world in such a twisted state of flux, the production and

safety of food is at a critical juncture, like never before. While development of the 2023 Farm Bill will address the paradigm shift taking place in the agricultural sector, final passage will take place in a presidential election year. Agriculture gets a boost with presidential politics starting in Iowa, where there is heightened awareness of the generational impact on the industry, which further underscores the importance of food security.

Stakeholders from production and conservation groups should closely observe and continue to provide input to the critical 2023 farm bill development. ■

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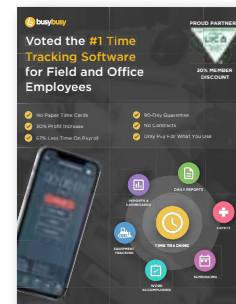
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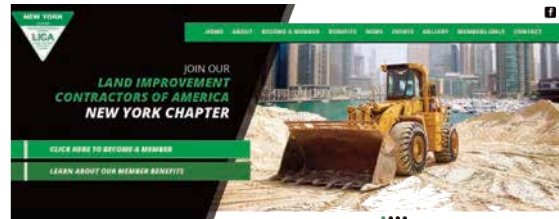
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|------------------|---|------------------------|----|---------------------|------------|
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| David Kennedy | 1 | Harry Hauschild | 1 | Insurance | 1 |
| Ron Masching | 1 | Matt Japp | 1 | Unidentified | 4 |
| Jon Seevers | 1 | Unidentified | 2 | | |
| Septic Training | 1 | | | | |
| None | 2 | | | | |
| | | New Jersey | | South Dakota | |
| | | Apprenticeship Program | 46 | Bryan VanderPol | 1 |
| | | Insurance | 9 | Insurance | 1 |
| | | Web | 1 | | |
| Indiana | | | | | |
| Darrell Birge | 1 | | | Tennessee | |
| | | | | John Tatum | 1 |
| | | New York | | | |
| Kansas | | Jerry Biuso/HardHat | 4 | | |
| Unidentified | 1 | Maura Dibble/HardHat | 3 | Mack | 1 |
| | | Bill Hatch/HardHat | 4 | | |
| Michigan | | Caroline Krug/HardHat | 4 | Total | 132 |
| Mike Cook | 1 | Jeff Phair/HardHat | 1 | | |
| Trevor Young | 1 | David Rule/HardHat | 4 | | |
| | | Chris Wagner/HardHat | 3 | | |
| | | Pat Wgner/HardHat | 3 | | |
| Minnesota | | Insurance | 6 | | |
| Unidentified | 3 | | | | |
| | | Ohio | | | |
| Missouri | | Mack | 3 | | |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> EMC | Earthmoving/Land Cleaning | <input type="checkbox"/> R | Reclamation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> EXG | Excavating/Grading | <input type="checkbox"/> SEP | Septic Systems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GR | Gravel/Rock Production | <input type="checkbox"/> SP | Site Preparation/Development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HD | Hardscaping | <input type="checkbox"/> SWU | Sewer/Water/Underground Utilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> LL | Land Leveling | <input type="checkbox"/> TH | Trucking or Hauling |
| <input type="checkbox"/> LS | Landscaping | <input type="checkbox"/> TW | Terraces or Waterways |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ODW | Open Ditch Work | <input type="checkbox"/> WM | Water Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SA | Dealer, Service Co., Government Agency, Consultant, Insurance Agency | | |

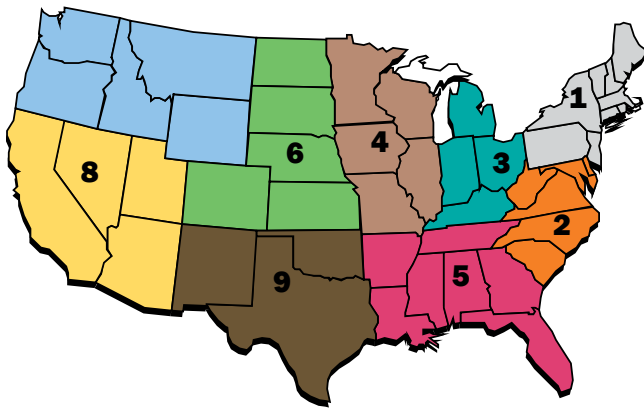
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